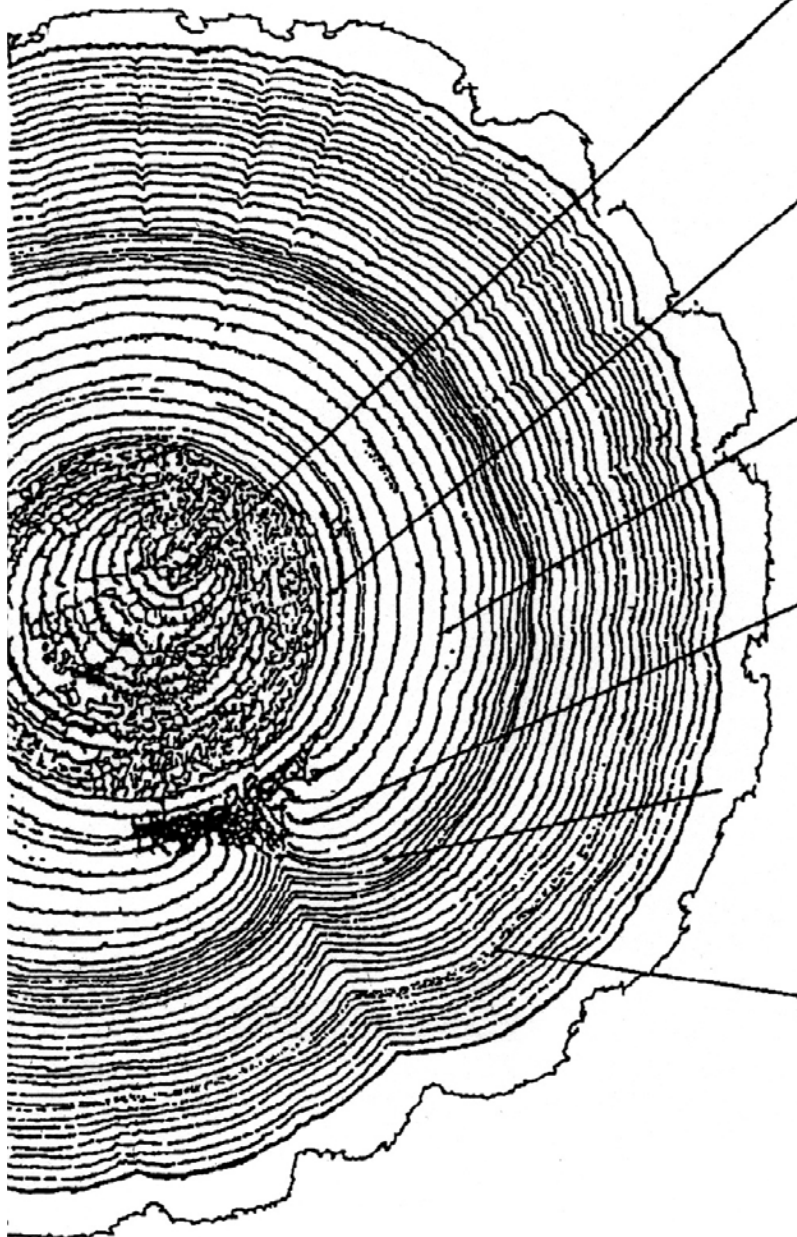


TREE GROWTH - A STORY

TEACHER REFERENCE



When this tree was 8 years old something brushed against it, making it lean. The rings are now wider on the lower side as the tree builds "reaction wood" to help support it.

The tree is growing straight again, but its neighbors are growing too, and their crowns and root systems take much of the water and sunshine the tree needs to grow. The rings are narrower.

The surrounding trees are harvested. The larger trees are removed and there is once again ample nourishment and sunlight. The tree can now grow rapidly again.

A fire sweeps through the forest. Fortunately the tree is only scarred, and year by year more and more of the scar is covered over by newly formed wood.

These narrow rings may have been caused by a prolonged dry spell. One or two dry summers would not have dried the ground enough to slow the tree's growth this much.

Another series of narrow rings may have been caused by an insect like the larva of the sawfly. It eats the leaves and leaf-buds of many kinds of coniferous trees.